

(TMI Journeys – April 2015)

REFLECTIONS ON MY TMI JOURNEY



by Joseph Felser

Joseph M. Felser, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Kingsborough Community College/CUNY in Brooklyn, New York. He is the author of two books and numerous articles and reviews.

The year was 1979. I was in the midst of a period of intense self-examination, both personal and professional, as I struggled mightily to reconcile my rational and “mystical” sides, when I came across a book entitled *Journeys Out of the Body*. The book’s author, one Bob Monroe, showed me that it was possible to do this—with wit, courage, honesty, and an iconoclastic spirit of inquiry reminiscent of René Descartes’ famous injunction to question everything. Bob indeed questioned everything—including the beliefs of both mainstream science and conventional religion, as well as the meaning of his own experiences—in his fierce quest for personal truth. His example greatly impressed and encouraged me.

Sometime later, in the early 1990s, I discovered that Bob had authored a second book, *Far Journeys*. That’s when I learned of the existence of Hemi-Sync® and The Monroe Institute®. As a result, I ordered the first two waves of the *GATEWAY EXPERIENCE*® in-home series. However, it took another eight years or so before I made it to TMI to attend the *GATEWAY VOYAGE*® program in 2000. Many more programs have followed since then.

My association with the Professional Division began in 2006, when I was invited by Laurie Monroe to deliver the seminar’s Keynote Address. Since then I have attended all but one of the Professional Division meetings. Most recently, I have been working on a research project examining the Exceptional Human Experiences of TMI residential program participants.

When I sat down to write this piece, I realized to my astonishment that I have been involved with some aspect of “Bob’s project”, in one way and to one extent or another, for nearly thirty-

five years. Thirty-five years! That is a long time indeed. And I wondered: What is it that has held my interest and attention for so long?

In contemplating this question, my thoughts returned to my philosophical vocation and its roots in that celebrated aphorism inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi: “Know thyself.” According to the Delphic Oracle, this is the font of all wisdom—and the Greek word *philosophia* literally means “the love of wisdom.” What philosophy is for, said R.G. Collingwood, is self-knowledge. However, the self in question is not just the self that we ordinarily think we are, or what we see when we look into the mirror, or even our unconscious mind; it is the greater Self that we really are: the totality of our wider, deeper identity that connects us to All That Is, and therefore to all things and to each other.

Hence, the experience of deep personal camaraderie, the sense of cosmic connection, and the inner revelations facilitated by TMI’s programs and audio technologies are all of a piece. We humans are indeed much more than our physical bodies, or, in Stanislav Grof’s memorable phrase (following Alan Watts), a mere “skin-encapsulated ego.” The exploration of expanded states of awareness, which is the hallmark of TMI’s mission, is consequently an indispensable element in the investigation of the mystery of consciousness and the perennial search for wisdom.

Whether it has been my reading of Bob’s books, my use of Hemi-Sync and SAM (both in programs and out), my research projects, or my encounters with all the amazing individuals I have met thanks to my association with the Institute—fellow Professional Division members and program participants, trainers, staff, and many other friends—the common thread in this colorful tapestry has been a constant revelation of what William James dubbed “the More” that we are.

It has been, and continues to be, a truly fantastic voyage.

Note: Hemi-Sync® is a registered trademark of Interstate Industries Inc., dba Monroe Products.